think of any difficulty on this score. I am very grateful and I, therefore, move that this House do proceed to pass this Bill.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES): The question is:

> "That the Bill to provide for validation of disciplinary powers exercised by the Vice-Chairman and officers of the Delhi Development Authority, be taken into consideration."

*The motion was adopted.*

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES): Now we shall take up clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill.

*Clauses 2 and 3 were added to the Bill.*

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES): Now we shall take up amendments. Mr. Minister to move.

*Clause 1 (Short Title)*

SHRI RAM JETHMALANI: Sir, I move:

> That at page 1, line 4, *for* the figure "1997", the figure "1998" be *substituted.*

*The question was put and the motion was adopted.*

*Clause 1, as amended, was added to the Bill.*

*ENACTING FORMULA*

SHRI RAM JETHMALANI: Sir, I move:

> That at page 1, line 1, *for* the word "Forty-eighth", the word "Forty-ninth" be *substituted.*

*The question was put and the motion was adopted.*

*The Enacting Formula, as amended, was added to the Bill.*

*The Title was added to the Bill.*

SHRI RAM JETHMALANI: Sir, I move:

> "That the Bill, as amended, be passed."

*The question was put and the motion was adopted.*

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES): Now there is a *suo motu* statement by Shri Sompal. *...(Interruptions)...*

SHRI JIBON ROY: Sir, this a policy statement. *...(Interruptions)...*

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES): The revised List of Business has been circulated. *...(Interruptions)...* It was fixed for five o'clock. *...(Interruptions)...*

SHRI JIBON ROY: Sir, it is a policy matter. *...(Interruptions)...*

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES): The Bill came in the way; so we deferred it by ten minutes. I think the hon. Minister can make his statement *...(Interruptions)...*

AN HON. MEMBER: What about clarifications? *...(Interruptions)*

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES): There are no names given for clarifications. *...(Interruptions)...* There will only be the statement by the Minister. *...(Interruptions)...* There are no names before me. *...(Interruptions)...* Yes, Mr. Minister.

## STATEMENT OF MINISTER

### Price Policy for Rabi Crops of 1998-99 to be Marketed in 1999-2000

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): The Government has fixed the Minimum Support Price (MSP) of wheat of Fair Average Quality at Rs. 550 per quintal for the crop of 1998-99 to be marketed in 1999-2000 season marking an increase of Rs. 95 per quintal over the MSP of Rs. 455 per quintal for the last year. The increase would, however, be Rs. 40 only when compared with the

effective procurement price of Rs. 510 (Rs. 455 MSP + Rs. 55 bonus) per quintal last year. The MSP fixed is also higher compared to Rs. 490 recommended by the CACP.

The MSP of Barley of Fair Average Quality has been fixed at Rs. 385 per quintal which marks an increase of Rs. 35 per qunital over the price of Rs. 350 per qunital fixed for 1998-99 marketing season.

The MSP of Gram of Fair Average Quality at Rs. 895 per qunital marks an increase of Rs. 80 per quintal over the previous year's price of Rs. 815 per qunital.

The MSP of Rapeseed/Mustard has been raised by Rs. 60 per quintal over the previous year's price and fixed at Rs. 1000 per quintal.

The MSP of Sanflower has been fixed at Rs. 990 per quintal which is higher by Rs. 80 quintal over the price of Rs. 910 fixed for the previous marketing season.

It is expected that these MSPs will provide sufficient inducement to the farmers for raising production and productivity of these crops.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES): I think the whole House is happy becaue there are no clarifications. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI R. MARGABANDU (Tamil Nadu): Sir, I would like to know whether the Government would increase the prices of paddy and sugarcane. ...*(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES): I am sorry that I should not have said that there are no clarifications. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI SOMPAL: Sir, let me clarify. I have understood what they want. There is a fixed calendar for announcing the Minimum Support Prices every year before the sowing starts. The prices of paddy and sugarcane had already been declared when the crop was yet to be sown. When the next year comes naturally the Minimum Support Prices will be announced. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI H.K. JAVARE GOWDA (Karnataka): Sir, what about coconut? The price of coconut is so low that the coconut growers are suffering losses for the last ten years. I request that remunerative prices should be fixed for coconut.

SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN (Kerala): Sir, with regard to procurement, usually, the Government will announce the floor price. The problem is, merely announcing the floor price will not do, because the farmers are not getting it. There is not mechanism for proper procurement. Last year, the support price announced for paddy was Rs. 450. But there was no proper mechanism to procure paddy. As a result, the farmers got only Rs. 350. The FCI said that gunny bags were not available. And because of the non-availability of gunny bags, farmers had to lose Rs. 100 per quintal. That is what is happening. Again, now, the off-take is coming down as compared to last year. If the off-take comes down, naturally, the procurement will also become difficult. The Government has to take note of this issue.

The other issue is, the procured wheat was diverted for other purposes *i.e.*, export. The FCI procured the wheat but it was diverted for export. This kind of problems are also there. So, how is the Government going to give benefits to the farmers? That has to be explained by the hon. Minister.

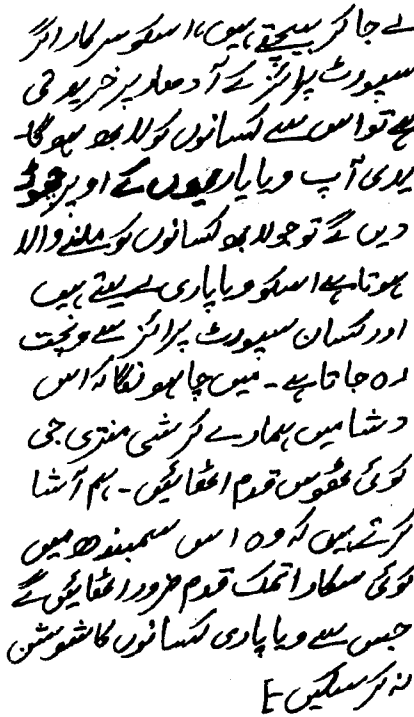
SHRI S.R. BOMMAI (Karnataka): Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to what is the scientific basis for fixing the support price by the National Agricultural Commission. No representation is there from the farmers on that. There have been demands from the farmers' associations that there should be some representation for them on the National Agricultural Commission. It has not been considered yet. The other thing

is, we do not know the basis on which they will announced the support price. I think, it will be done only on an *ad hoc* basis. Every year, on a particular date, they declare the Minimum Support Price for wheat, paddy, etc. We do not know what the data is and what the basis is. If the hon. Minister can enlighten us on that, it would be good. The farmers would be happy to know that. At least, there should be some rationale behind it. Otherwise, if it is at the whims and fancies of the Members of the National Agricultural Commission, naturally, the farmers will suffer. They are paying higher price for fertilizers, transport, for use of tractors, diesel, etc. Because of these things, the cost of production is increasing and, therefore, the Minimum Support Price should also increase.

Apart from that, there should be centres where arrangements have to be made for purchase of the farmers' produce properly and preserving it properly. Sir, particularly, in a State like Punjab, in every *mandi*, there is a heavy stock. Nobody is there to take care of it. If there is rain, etc., you cannot protect it. There are no godowns. That is how, many-a-time, foodgrains were destroyed. I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to what is the arrangement, the Government of India, has made for procurement in different States?

**श्री जलालुदीन अंसारी** (बिहार): उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, माननीय कृषि मंत्री जी ने जो न्यूनतम समर्थन मूल्य की घोषणा की है, मैं उसका समर्थन करता हूं लेकिन मुझे एक बात कहनी है कि सरकार जो भी समर्थन मूल्य की घोषणा करती है, वह आम किसानों को नहीं मिल पाता है। उसका मूल कारण यह है कि जब फसल बाजार में आती है तो उनसे खरीदने के लिए कोई सरकारी ऐजसियां हर प्रदेश में नहीं हैं। होता यह है कि तब वह व्यापारियों के हाथ में चला जाता है और व्यापारी बाजार में मूल्य तय करते हैं जिससे मजबूरी में किसानों को कम दाम पर अपनी फसल को बेचना पड़ता है। हम माननीय मंत्री जी से कहना चाहेंगे कि फूड कारपोरेशन आफ इंडिया या दूसरी एजेसियों के माध्यम से देश के विभिन्न हिस्सों में, देश के विभिन्न प्रांतों की मंडियों के जो क्षेत्र हैं जहां किसान अपनी फसल को ले जाकर बेचते हैं, उसको सरकार अगर सपोर्ट प्राइस के आधार पर खरीदती है तो उससे किसानों को लाभ होगा। यदि आप व्यापारियों के ऊपर छोड़ देंगे तो जो लाभ किसान को मिलने वाला होता है उसको व्यापारी ले लेते हैं और किसान सपोर्ट प्राइस से वंचित रह जाता है। मैं चाहूंगा कि इस दिशा में हमारे कृषि मंत्री जी कोई ठोस कदम उठायें। हम आशा करते हैं कि वह इस संबंध में कोई सकारात्मक कदम अवश्य उठायेंगे जिससे व्यापारी किसानों का शोषण न कर सकें।

†[श्री जलालुद्दीन अंसारी "बिहार": اپ سبھا ادھیکش مہودے، مانیہ کرشی منتری جی نے جو نیوتم سمرتھن ملیہ کی گھوشنا کی ہے، میں اسکا سمرتھن کرتا ہوں لیکن مجھے ایک بات کہنی ہے کہ سرکار جو بھی سمرتھن ملیہ کی گھوشنا کرتی ہے، وہ عام کسانوں کو نہیں مل پاتا ہے۔ اسکا مول کارن یہ ہے کہ جب فصل بازار میں آتی ہے تو اس سے خریدنے کے لئے کوئی سرکاری ایجنسیاں ہر پردیش میں نہیں ہیں، ہوتا یہ ہے کہ تب وہ وپاریوں کے ہاتھ میں چلا جاتا ہے اور وپاری بازار میں ملیہ طے کرتے ہیں جس سے مجبوری میں کسانوں کو کم دام پر اپنی فصل کو بیچنا پڑتا ہے۔ ہم مانیہ منتری جی سے کہنا چاہیں گے کہ فوڈ کارپوریشن آف انڈیا یا دوسری ایجنسیوں کے مادھیم سے دیش کے وبھن بھاگوں میں، پردیش کے وبھن پرانتوں میں منڈیوں کے جو شیتر ہیں جہاں کسان اپنی فصل کو



**सरदार बलविन्दर सिंह भुंडर** (पंजाब): आनरेबल वाइस चेयरमैन साहब, पहले तो मैं मिनिस्टर साहब को बधाई देता हूं कि काफी अर्से के बाद फारमर्स को अच्छी कीमतें मिलने लगी हैं। लेकिन जो असली पाइंट मैं आनरेबल मिनिस्टर साहब से कहना चाहता हूं वह यह है कि जो 550 रुपये प्राइस इन्होंने मुकर्रर की है वह पिछले तीन-चार सालों के मुताबिक अच्छी है। लेकिन कुल मिलाकर जो 1967 में 76 रुपये प्रति क्विंटल प्राइस थी उसके मुताबिक तो इनपुट्स के रेट बढ़े हैं, ट्वअंटी टाईम्स रेट बढ़े हैं। उसके मुताबिक यह जो व्हीट के रेट्स हैं यह टेन टाइम्स भी नहीं बढ़े हैं, 76×10=760 बनते हैं। इसलिए मैं यह कहना चाहता हूं कि प्राइस इनडेक्स के मुताबिक यह बहुत कम है। छलांग तो अच्छी लगाई है लेकिन और अच्छी लगनी चाहिए थी। मैं इसके साथ ही यह कहना चाहता हूं कि अगर इसके साथ 50 रुपये बोनस जोड़ दें तो यह मिनीमम 600 रुपये जरूर होना चाहिए। इसके साथ ही मैं यह कहना चाहता हूं कि जो पोस्ट हार्वेस्ट टेक्नालाजी है उसमें सुधार करना चाहिए जो फारमर्स प्रोड्यूस करता है वह बल्क में जब स्टोर होता है तो स्टोर होने के बाद एक-दो साल में सारा बर्बाद हो जाता है, इससे नेशनल लोस होता है और कंज्यूमर को प्राब्लम आती है। एक सब्सिडी सिस्टम होना चाहिए। अगर फारमर्स इंडिव्यूजल लेवल पर स्टोर करना चाहता है तो उसको भी स्टेट से सब्सिडी मिलनी चाहिए। वर्ल्ड में लेटेस्ट सेलोटाइप टेक्नालाजी आ गई है। जहां मायक्षर चैक करके और अच्छे गोदाम बनाकर के उनमें बीन्स डाली जाती है। इस किस्म का स्टोरेज सिस्टम करना चाहिए जिससे कि नेशनल लोस न हो और समय पर जब कन्ट्री को जरूरत हो उस समय मिल सके। अभी तक तो यह दो-तीन साल बाद ही बर्बाद हो जाती है। इससे कंट्री का भी लोस होता है और खाने वालों का भी लोस होता है। मैं यह मांग करता हूं कि अगर प्राइस में बोनस 50 रुपये बढ़ा दिया जाए तो वह प्राइस 600 रुपये हो जाएगा। दूसरी मेरी मांग यह है कि स्टोरेज की कैपेसिटी बढ़ानी चाहिए, उसका बैटर अरेंजमेंट करना चाहिए, सेलो सिस्टम जो वर्ल्ड में लेटेस्ट टेक्नालाजी आ गई है उसको इंडिया में लाना चाहिए, क्योंकि इंडिया एक एग्रीकल्चरल बेस्ड कंट्री है। आने वाली जो पापुलेशन है और जो वर्ल्ड की पापुलेशन है वह हमारे सिस्टम पर निर्भर रहेगी।

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES): Gautamji, do you want to say something?

**श्री संघ प्रिय गौतम** (उत्तर प्रदेश): उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, कृषि मंत्री जी को और भारत सरकार को मैं इस बात की बधाई देता हूं कि किसान के उत्पाद के दाम उन्होंने बढ़ाये हैं। लेकिन कृषि मंत्री जी यह जानते हैं कि जो फसल बोई जाने वाली है उसमें बोते समय खाद की आवश्यकता पड़ती है और डीएपी बाजार में है नहीं। इसलिए आप दाम कितने ही बढ़ा दें अगर किसान का उत्पाद नहीं बढ़ेगा तो फिर किसान को क्या लाभ होगा? क्या मंत्री महोदय अपनी सरकार से किसानों के लिए खाद की, डीएपी की व्यवस्था करवायेंगे?

दूसरा सवाल मेरा मंत्री जी से यह है कि आगे आने वाली फसल के बारे में आपका क्या अनुमान है कि कैसी फसल होगी?

THE VICE- CHAIRMAN (SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES): Mr. Minister, do you want to react to this?

SHRI SOMPAL: Yes, (*Interruptions*)

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES): I think Mrs. Urmilaben Patel wants to say something.

**डा० (श्रीमती) उर्मिला चिमनभाई पटेल** (गुजरात): मैं मंत्री जी को बधाई देते हुए यह कहना चाहूंगी कि जो प्राइस को बढ़ाया गया है इसकी तो खुशी होती है लेकिन जो प्राइस हाइक है सभी खाद्य पदार्थों में, तो इनके मुताबिक मेरे हिसाब से राइज नहीं किया गया है क्योंकि कहीं-कहीं पर दो गुना, चार गुना प्राइस हाइक हुआ है।

दूसरी बात मैं यह कहना चाहती हूं कि मंत्री जी को याद होगा जब हम कमेटी में बैठकर डिस्कस करते थे कि मिनिमम स्पोर्ट प्राइस में जो प्रोडेक्शन के खर्च हैं उसकी भी गिनती की जाती है और फार्मर्स के लेबर की गिनती नहीं होती है। मंत्री जी जब कमेटी में मेम्बर थे तो इसके लिए लड़ते थे। उन्होंने इन बातों को इसमें इन्क्लूड किया है या नहीं इससे हमें अवगत कराएं?

तीसरी बात मैं यह कहना चाहती हूं कि जब किसान डायरेक्टली मंडी में अपना माल लेकर आये तो वह अपना माल बेच सके, इसका भी प्रावधान होना चाहिए। यहां आपने जो प्राइस राइस दिया है इसका फायदा मिडिलमैन या कारपेरेशन, सोसाइटीज को जायेगा और किसान को डायरेक्टली नहीं मिलेगा। यदि मिलेगा तो बहुत कम मिलेगा। किसान अगर सीधा मंडी में आकर बेचना चाहे तो एफसीआई उसको खरीदे, ऐसा प्रावधान भी होना जरूरी है।

अंतिम बात मैं यह कहना चाहती हूं कि आपने जिस तरह से गेहूं, ग्राम मस्टर्ड के प्राइस डिक्लेयर किये हैं उसी तरह से कपास और कोटन के प्राइस भी डिक्लेयर करें? क्योंकि कोटन और कपास का इस वक्त सीजन है और इसके प्राइस तो इतने कम हो गए हैं कि करीब 50 परसेंट लास्ट ईयर से कम बिक रहा है। क्या आप सीजन के पहले कोटन के सपोर्ट प्राइस एनाउन्स करेंगे ताकि किसान को उसका फायदा हो? शायद मंत्री जी को ये दोनों बातें याद होगी कि हम कोटन कमेटी में यह डिस्कस करते रहे हैं कि प्राइस और एक्सपोर्ट क्वालिटी दोनों पहले से डिक्लेयर की जाएं।

SHRI SOMPAL: Sir, I thank all the hon. Members, who have raise very valuable and important points regarding the minimum support price declared by the Government.

Responding to what Mr. Vijaya Raghavan has said that procurement arrangements have not been adequate, I would like to say that all the 24 commodities, the minimum price of which we are declaring, are according to a fixed calendar and are well before the sowing season starts, though this time there has been a bit of delay in declaring the wheat prices. On the one hand they are aimed at giving remunerative prices to the farmers and on the other, they are aimed at making food items available at reasonable prices to the consumers. It is the basic role of the Food Corporation of India and other agencies, who do these market intervention operations as directed by the Government from trime to time.

So far as exports are concerned, all decisions on exports are taken with due reference to the food requirement of the nation keeping in view the food security of the country. Only that part of commodity or commodities is or are exported, which is or are over and above the requirements of the nation.

So far as export of rice is concerned, I am pleased to inform you that in spite of the export, we had enough stoks lying in our godowns in Punjab. The apprehension was that if we do not clear them immediately, the crop was such that we would not have adequate capacity to store the coming harvest. So, all these decisions are taken after due care about the Indian requirements.

The point raised by Shri S.R. Bommai was about the composition of the Commission on Agricultural Costs and Prices. He is right that there is no representative on the C.A.C.P. as a farmers' representative. But, the people who are there are economists and are experts in farm economics and farm economy and they have been given a mandate, according to which they make calculations, which are quite comprehensive as well as complicated and all costs are included in those calculations.

Sir, to give you a brief view, the CACP takes into consideration the value of hired human labour. This takes care of the point raised by Mrs. Urmilabhen Patel. It also takes into consideration the

value of hired bullock labour, value of owned bullock labour, value of owned machinery and labour, hired machinery charges, value of seed, both farm produce as well as purchased seeds, value of insecticides and pesticides, value of manure both owned and purchased, value of fertilier, depreciation on implements and farm buildings, irrigation charges, land revenue, cesses and other taxes, interest on working capital and miscellaneous expenses. The total of these items is reckoned as cost A1. Then cost A1 plus rent paid for leased-in land is reckoned as cost A2. The cost A1 plus interest on value of owned fixed capital assets excluding land, is cost B1. The cost B1 plus rental value of owned land, net of land revenue and rent paid for leased-in land, is cost B2. Then cost B1 plus imputed value of family labour. Mrs. Patel you have to listen to this also. The family labour also is taken as one of the cost parameters. Then, we recheck cost C1. Then cost B2 plus imputed value of family labour is cost C2. Over and above cost C2 plus additional value of human labour based on use of higher rate, that is, statutory minimum wage rate or the actual market rate. This is an intermediate concept.

Then, we add 10 per cent of cost to C2 cost on account of managerial input of the farmer. Then, we arrive at cost C3.

All the rates which are recommended by the CACP are required to cover at least C3. In this case I am again pleased to inform you, Mr. Vice-Chairman, and the the House that the CACP had recommended only Rs. 490 whereas we have decided to fix it at Rs. 550 which is Rs. 60 over and obove the recommendation of the CACP.

The point raised by the hon. Member, Shri Bommai, that farmers' representatives should be there is all right. But after all, we are all farmers' representatives. The recommendation of the CACP is not normally accepted. We do make some amendments to the prices recommended by the CACP.

Shri Bommai also mentioned about the damage to the harvested crop. It is due to lack of properly covered sheds in the *mandi* places; and also due to lack of inadequate godown facilities of the right quality. This has been really a constraint to protect the harvested crop. Recently, the Government has come out with a huge programme to create adequate facilities of right quality. Some high-tech facilities would be created which can be utilised for carrying over the stock beyond a crop; and also to keep the fertility of the seed and its value intact. This would be a part of the food security programme for market intervention purposes; and also to meet sudden shortages like the ones which we are facing this year. For example, arhar dal, onions and potatoes.

Recently, the Prime Minister had announced that the Government is going to embark on a large-scale programme of creating godown facilities in all the blocks of India to the tune of 2,000 tonnes per block wherein 50 per cent contribution would be made by the Central Government as the one time grant so that the perishable commodities can be stored there.

Mr. Ansari said that the prices received by farmers are not equal to support prices. Our endeavour always has been that farmers should not receive only the support price. The support price is the minimum cutting edge. We wish they receive something more than that. This is declared, at least, to equalise the price received by farmers when the harvest comes because farming has a unique nature. It is not like a continuous scheme of production in a trading house or in an industrial house or like the wage-earners who take their pay-packet every month. The farmer has to wait from the time of sowing to the time of harvesting. The farmer incurs expenses not only on his household, but also on the economic-

activity, that is, farming. He gets his income only at the time of harvesting. At the time of harvesting, his tolerance level almost goes out. He is not able to hold on to those waiting demands which become very intense and accentuated at that point of time and he is forced to make distress sale. It is to stem this distress sale and meet this position that these prices are declared and adequate procurement arrangements are being made everywhere. But there are certain pockets like the one in Karnataka, for example. In the case of groundnut in Karnataka, this year in one place, the farmers had to be fired at by the Government because they turned violent because there was no market. And immediately, the NAFED and other agencies were rushed to procure. Except one or two such incidents, Minimum Support Prices are always protected and upheld.

Sardar Balwinder Singhji Bhundar also pointed out towards post-harvest technology and storage facility improvement which I have already responded to. Silos are naturally a better and upgraded storage system and we are likely to have more silos in future so that these crops can be carried over to the next year or for a longer time than at present.

SARDAR BALWINDER SINGH BHUNDAR: Sir, would you say something about the bonus?

SHRI SOMPAL: On bonus, Mr. Vice-Chairman, we have declared the prices at Rs. 550/-. This year, we are not going to pay any bonus in addition to this because the CACP has made a very specific recommendation that whatever price has to be declared by the Government, it has to be done at the time of declaring the Minimum Support Prices. Bonus during the last two years was to be announced because the farmers were not ready to offer adequate quantities of commodities for the procurement system. Therefore, it has been decided that way. We raised the prices over and above the CACP recommendation; by Rs. 60 and Rs. 95 more than the last year's CACP recommendations on MSP and also Rs. 40 over and above last year's price including the bonus. Therefore, no bonus will be paid this year.

Mr. Gautam has raised a point about DAP availability. I may inform you that we have been monitoring the situation. Enough imports have been made. There have been some problems. This has arisen in view of the late rains which have taken place in parts of Gujarat and the whole of Rajasthan and other areas. And the area sown, according to our information, is much more than last year.

In the case of U.P., we had projected six lakh tonnes as the requirement for the rabi season and 5,10,000 tonnes have already reached about two weeks ago. We had imported enough quantity. And 1,32,000 tonnes of DAP is still at the Vizag port because of two disturbances. The disturbances were in the form of cyclones, two high-intensity and one low-intensity. For 26 days, it could not be evacuated from the Vizag port. Now railway wagons have been provided in adequate number and it is being moved. I monitored U.P. and other States yesterday. Supplies are reaching within 2-3 days. There will be no shortage. It is only in certain pockets. Overall, there is no shortage. In South India, there is no shortage. It is only in U.P., Bihar and parts of Rajasthan and Haryana that some shortage was there. Now we are meeting it.

Then, regarding the question about crop estimate, I have already said that this year we expect that if everything goes well, for the first time, rabi crop will outstrip kharif crop in India because sowing has been done on a larger area and because of the moisture residue on account of late rain, I think it is going to be a bumper crop.

Mrs. Urmilaben Patel has asked about cotton price. I repeat my remark that

cotton price had been declared in April last because it is the month of April-May that cotton is sown. Before the next season we will again declare the price. Now it is in the pre-harvesting season. Rather, the harvest is almost over. So far as the prices prevailing are concerned, our information is that cotton prices in all the markets of India are ruling at much higher levels than the Minimum Support Prices. If there is any instance which has come to her notice where the prices are below the Minimum Support Prices, we will undertake to procure cotton there. But according to our information, there is not a single point in India where they are below the Minimum Support Prices. Rather, they are quite above the MSP.

So far as export of cotton is concerned, it has been a practice now that adequate quantity of export is announced before the harvest and during the harvest and whatever is there available after the harvest and due budgetting, the remaining quantity is also announced. There has not been any problem at least during this year. Thank you, Mr. Vice-Chairman, and I thank all the Members.

SHRIMATI URMILABEN CHIMANBHAI PATEL: What about the availability of bags?

SHRI SOMPAL: At some places, the availability of bags becomes a constraint, but for a short while. But on account of shortage of bags, there has never been a problem in procurement, except for a short while at some places.

**सरदार बलविन्दर सिंह भुंडर**: आनरेबल मिनिस्टर साहब, जो आपने डाटा दिया है पैटर्न का, जो प्राइस कमीशन नियत करता है, उसमें दो प्वायंट जो मैंने सुने नहीं, एक तो लैंड की प्रोडक्टिविटी डिक्रीज़ कर रही है डे बाय डे उसको इन्होंने कहीं जोड़ा नहीं कमीशन वालों ने, जो कि सब से इंपार्टेंट प्वायंट है। सैकण्ड, जो नेचुरल कैलामिटीज़ है उस के लिए भी इस में जोड़ना चाहिए। वह हर दफा आ जाती है। ये दो प्वायंट इस में कवर होना चाहिए। आनरेबल मिनिस्टर साहब से यह मेरी रेक्वेस्ट है।

SHRI SOMPAL: Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, these two points cannot be covered in the Minimum Support Price Programme. The Minimum Support Price is declared to cover only the cost incurred, the operational cost as well as the fixed cost. But so far as the natural calamities and the damages caused by these to the crops is concerned, I would like to inform the House—I think we have already informed—that we are coming out with an insurance scheme which will cover all the farmers in India, without any restriction on the holding of the farmer as well as the amount. The earlier comprehensive crop insurance scheme was operative only in fourteen districts. Now it is being made applicable universally, throughout India, for all crops, all farmers, without any limit of the amount or the holding. Thank you, Sir.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES): Now, I think, it is all right.

SARDAR BALWINDER SINGH BHUNDAR: What about the decrease in productivity?

SHRI SOMPAL: Sir, the decrease in productivity is a wider issue. But still I can respond. There has been some report of decrease in fertility as a response to inputs and a study has been conducted by the ICAR. We are taking steps to take care of the depletion of certain micro-nutrients which are causing diminishing returns; not diminishing fertility, but diminishing economic returns. We are aware of this and we are taking steps to have comprehensive crop practices, including organic inputs and bio-fertilizers and integrated pest management. Thank you.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES): Now, we have only one speaker. We can resume further discussion on the Government Motion. The reply will be on Monday. Shri R.N. Arya.